Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 05054 192109Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 SCS-06 CA-01 HA-05 MCT-01 IO-13
ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EUR-12 OPR-02 ARA-10 /111 W
----------047736 192112Z /70
O 192041Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9826
INFO LAMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE 8661

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 5054

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CASC, CG
SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: INITIAL REPORTS ON KOLWEZI RESCUE OPERATION

1. ZAMISH CHIEF HAS JUST RETURNED FROM COMMAND POST WHERE GENERAL BABIA IS FOLLOWING PROGRESS OF FRENCH PARATROOP OPERATION IN KOLWEZI. WHILE THERE, ZAMISH CHIEF OBTAINED REPORT WHICH WAS TRANSMITTED BY RADIO BY COL. GRAS, FRENCH MISSION CHIEF. GRAS HAD BEEN IN AIRBORNE COMMAND CENTER OVER KOLWEZI DURING INITIAL STAGES OF OPERATION AND WAS ENROUTE BACK TO KINSHASA WHERE HE WILL ARRIVE AT 2000Z FOR DEBRIEFING. GRAS PRELIMINARY REPORT FOLLOWS:

2. FIRST WAVE OF FRENCH PARATROOPERS LANDED KOLWEZI 1600 LOCAL WITH 450 PARATROOPERS. DROP ZONE LOCATED NORTH OF OLD TOWN. HEAVY FIGHTING SOUTHEAST OF GENDARME CAMP. THERE WAS HEAVY FIGHTING IN NEW TOWN. 20 HOSTAGES LIBERATED AT ECOLE TECHNIQUE LOCATED ONE KILOMETER SOUTH OF RAILROAD STATION. ALL ORGANIZED UNITS OF EX-KATAGAN REBELS LEFT THIS MORNING EXCEPT FOR SMALL ELEMENTS. ONE CUBAN MOTORIZED COMPANY (SIC) LEFT THIS MORNING. FRENCH SUSTAINED THREE JUMP INJURIES, ONE SERIOUS. SECOND WAVE OF PARATROOPS DID NOT JUMP AS IT WAS TOO LATE IN DAY. THEY ARE PREPARED TO
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PAGE 02 KINSHA 05054 192109Z

JUMP AT 0630 LOCAL 20 MAY. TWO FAZ OFFICERS LIBERATED.

3. GRAS SAID SITUATION IS AS PESSIMISTIC AS FEARED."
ESTIMATED 40 EUROPEANS HAD BEEN EXECUTED. CLOSE TO THE NOTRE DAME CHURCH, BODIES OF FOUR EUROPEANS FOUND INSIDE A CAR. SIX FRENCH MILITARY ADVISERS ARE IN HANDS OF REBELS. ONE PANHARD CAPTURED BY THE REBELS DURING THE FIGHTING IS STILL

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MANEUVERING IN THE ZONE.

4. AT 1800 KINSHASA TIME, GENERAL BABIA REQUESTED BELGIAN MISSION CHIEF TO COMMENCE OPERATIONS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. BELGIAN STATED ONLY HALF HIS PEOPLE (600) HAD ARRIVED. THEY ARE COMMAND GROUP AND A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF SUPPLIES. HOWEVER, BELGIAN SAID HE WOULD RELAY REQUEST TO BRUSSELS.

5. FRENCH AMBASSADOR ALSO GAVE US BRIEF READ-OUT, APPARENTLY USING SAME INFORMATION FROM COL. GRAS. ROSS' REPORT GENERALLY TRACKS WITH ABOVE, EXCEPT WITH USUAL CAUTION HE PREFERRED TO DESCRIBE REPORTED CUBANS AS "MOTORIZED COMPANY OF NON-AFRICAN TROOPS, BELIEVED BY POPULATION TO BE CUBANS." ROSS ALSO MENTIONED REPORT THAT SMALL UNITS OF WELL-TRAINED KATANGANS LEFT KOLWEZI ALONG WITH MOTORIZED COMPANY.

6. WISH TO STRESS ABOVE IS ONLY INITIAL INFO, DRAWN FROM SINGLE SOURCE, WHICH REMAINS TO BE CONFIRMED.
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20 Mar 2014
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